



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

January 7, 2005

Statement

ICE PROVIDES RELIEF TO TSUNAMI-AFFECTED NATIONS

Working in coordination with other branches of the U.S. government, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is taking a number of steps to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Southeast Asia stemming from last month's earthquake and tsunami.

In accordance with this effort, the Department's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has temporarily suspended all alien removals to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. This temporary suspension, which began on December 30, 2004, is in response to the humanitarian crisis and specific to these two nations due to the massive infrastructure damage.

Under the policy, all individuals who have been ordered removed to Sri Lanka and the Maldives will be afforded a stay of removal until April 7, 2005. The granting of the stay of removal is automatic – no request or petition is necessary. A process also has been established to accommodate requests by aliens who wish to be exempt from the stay and be expeditiously removed to Sri Lanka or the Maldives in order to assist in relief efforts.

With regard to other nations affected by the tsunami, non-criminal aliens from those nations may request a temporary stay of removal to remain in the United States. Aliens from affected nations who have not been convicted of a felony may request this temporary stay without having to pay the filing fee that is traditionally required for stay requests. ICE will review each request and make determinations on a case-by-case basis. If a request is granted, the stay of removal will be valid until April 7, 2005.

DHS and ICE are committed to the global effort to provide relief in the wake of the disaster and are coordinating with the other branches of the U.S. government and non-governmental community organizations to offer technical support and assistance. DHS and ICE will monitor regional developments and conduct ongoing assessments to determine the need for possible further action.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).